

1 VIDA McKEE

Tape #178

Interviewed by: Lapoint 6th grader, Heidi Cosette, 11 May 1987

Transcribed by: Janet Taylor, June 2001

Interview with Vida McKee on schools:

Heidi: Today is May 11, and I'm doing this for a history project in Mrs. Squires' class. What did your school look like?

Vida: My school was just a four-room brick school. It just had four rooms in it.

Heidi: What kind of games did you play at recess?

Vida: We played jump-the-rope, and swung on swings, and played marbles, and slid down the slippery-slide, and we had a thing that we called a "Giant Stride" that we would hang onto with our hands, and it went around and around and around.

Heidi: How was your class heated?

Vida: With coal stoves in each room. My mother was a janitor and she used to walk a mile to school and build a fire in each room and when she got the rooms all warm then she'd ring the bell at eight o'clock, and that was the signal to everyone in the neighborhood that it was time to come to school. Then she used to walk home. The reason she did this is because my father had died when I was about one and a half years old and she had seven children and so she had to work to support us. So, she had a job of doing janitor work and she had to walk up and do her janitor work, and then walk home, and then walk back up to clean up the schoolhouse, and then come back home. Sometimes I would stay and when I got old enough and went to school. Sometimes I would walk up with her and I would stay and help her clean up the schoolhouse when she got through.

Heidi: What did you wear to school?

Vida: Stockings, and tucked down inside the stockings the underwear was folded over and down inside the stockings. Cotton, long, brown stockings. Cotton stockings.

Heidi: How did you get to school?

Vida: We walked. We had a mile to walk to school. We walked every morning in the winter, and it was cold.

Heidi: How many grades were put in one class?

Vida: Two grades in each room. First and second in one room, third and fourth in another room, and fifth and sixth in another room, and seventh and eighth in the other room.

Heidi: How long were your recesses?

Vida: I can't remember. About fifteen minutes in the morning, then noon hour, then fifteen minutes in the afternoon, then we'd get home about – school would let out about three o'clock, I guess, I can't remember, but I know we used to let out about three.

Heidi: How old were you when you first went to school?

Vida: I was six.

Heidi: What were your favorite subjects in school?

Vida: Reading, writing, and arithmetic. I guess, that's about all we studied.

Heidi: What were the hardest subjects?

Vida: I don't know. I know one time we had spelling words and I would always write them down, every time I'd write them down they would be wrong, so my mother would see them on the blackboard and she would write them down and bring them home and every time I'd have them wrong, so she'd have me study the ones she would write down. And I would get a hundred percent because she would always write them down for me.

Then one time we had a spelling test and, "Everybody that gets a hundred," our teacher said, "Everybody that gets a hundred in spelling test this week," that was the month that we had a whole big long spelling test, "can go out and play as soon as the test is over. And anybody that doesn't get a hundred, or even who thinks of looking on anybody else's page, they have to stay in the whole recess and then some." So, we had the test and I got a hundred because my mother had written them down for me right.

Heidi: Did you eat hot lunches at school?

Vida: No, we didn't eat hot lunches. We had to either take a sandwich or go without. When I was in about, I think, the fifth or sixth, I think they came around or some of the parents got together and made some soup and we had a bowl of hot soup for our dinner.

Heidi: Did you ever go home and eat?

Vida: No, I didn't want to walk a full mile home, it was too far away. I brought a sandwich.

Heidi: Where did you go to school?

Vida: I went to school in Vernal, in Davis Ward. Out in Davis they had a kind of school there, and they had one in Naples. When I went to school for the fourth grade and then when I was in the fifth grade, they sent us all to Naples. They shut down the school in Davis Ward, then we went to Naples school.

Heidi: Did you ever ride a bus to school?

Vida: Not until I went to Naples. Then we rode a bus, because it was about two and a half miles over to Naples. But I walked all the time I went to Davis. I lived just kind of on the border between Davis and Naples.

Heidi: Were you friends with all the kids at school?

Vida: Yes, I had lots of friends. When I got over to Naples, I had a real good friend, her name was Jean Stacy. We were the champion chinners of the school and we went up to Vernal high school and had a track meet and we won the prize for chinning more than any of the kids at the school.

Heidi: What is “chinning”?

Vida: Chinning is where you put your hands on the bar and pull yourself up until you touch your chin on the bar.

Heidi: What were your teachers' names?

Vida: Well, in the second grade I had Miss Simper. In the third and fourth grades I had Miss Richards. Then in the fifth and sixth – for fifth we went over to Naples and I had Miss Goodrich. Then in the fifth and sixth again, I had Mr. Lybbert and then we had a music teacher and his name was Mr. Heaton, and he taught us all kinds of fun songs to sing. We had a harmonica band and I was in the harmonica band and we played all over. We were pretty good. Then, by that time they had a junior high so I went up to junior high and rode a bus up to junior high school. From then on I rode the bus to school. From the first grade to the fifth grade, I walked to school.

Heidi: Did anybody ride bikes to school?

Vida: No, we didn't ride bikes to school. We didn't have bikes. If somebody had horses, they rode a horse sometimes, but everybody walked. There weren't any bikes. I guess some people in the cities had bikes, but we didn't have bikes.